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CONNECT2HEALTHFCC TASK FORCE  
VIRTUAL LISTENING SESSION - POLICYMAKERS FORUM

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Washington, D.C.

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Wednesday, September 27, 2017

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## 1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 (1:30 p.m.)

3 OPERATOR: Ladies and gentlemen, thank  
4 you for standing by and welcome to the  
5 Connect2Health FCC Virtual Listening Session  
6 Policymakers Forum. At this time all participants  
7 are in a listen-only mode and later you will have  
8 an opportunity to queue up by pressing \* then 1.  
9 We will also have an interactive session in the  
10 call where you will need to mute accordingly as  
11 well. If you should require assistance during the  
12 call you may press \* then 0. As a reminder, this  
13 conference is being recorded. Currently we will  
14 be taking a role call and I'll provide the names  
15 of the callers.

16 We have Eli Fleet with HIMSS; Jacob  
17 Terrell, National Association of Counties;  
18 Jennifer Plymale with Marhsall University; Maria  
19 Givens with NCAI; Tim Carney with ASTHO; Kamala  
20 Hart with FCC; Patty Mechael with HIMSS; Carolyn  
21 McCoy with ASTHO; Eric Frederic with Connected  
22 Nation; Cindy Muir with NARUC; Andy Rhea with

1 Cherokee Health Systems; Chantal Worzala with  
2 American Hospital Association; Jeff Hallstrand  
3 with Price County Teleplant; Tracy Hines with  
4 Colorado Telehealth; Michael Morris with WVDHHR;  
5 Jeff Reardon with FCC; Michele Ellison with FCC  
6 Task Force; Susan Howard with NADO; Tracy Brewer  
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8 National League of Cities; Leonie Heyworth with  
9 VA; Michael Iaquina with iSelectMD; Suleima  
10 Salgado with Georgia Department of Health; Kevin  
11 Galpin with VHA; John Peters with Veterans  
12 Affairs; William England with HRSA; Elaine Gardner  
13 with FCC Disability Rights Office; Emily Moore  
14 with ASTHO; Maureen Lewis with NTIA; Tom Watson  
15 with Anderson Court Reporting; Gayle Teicher with  
16 FCC; Yahya Shaikh with Connect2Health. We also  
17 have on the call Chris Gibbons, David Ahern, Ben  
18 Bartolome, and Karen Onyeije. At this time I  
19 would like to turn the conference over to our  
20 host, Karen Onyeije. Please go ahead.

21 MS. ONYEIJE: Thank you, Carolyn, we  
22 appreciate that. Good afternoon, everybody. My

1     this virtual listening session is related to the  
2     Commission's April 24, 2017 Public Notice on  
3     Broadband Health, and it is the fourth in the  
4     series. The vision behind these listening  
5     sessions is really to create an acceptable  
6     mechanism to accommodate the significant interest  
7     in this broadband health proceeding from numerous  
8     stakeholders across the country.

9             One of the key areas of focus that we  
10    had is on the broadband health gap. By that I'm  
11    referring to the apparent divide at the  
12    intersection of broadband and health between rural  
13    and underserved communities on the one hand and  
14    their more urban and digitally connected  
15    counterparts on the other. Based on some data  
16    analysis conducted by the Task Force we found  
17    that, unfortunately, the broadband health divide  
18    is wide and it's growing. For example, we found  
19    that the picture of health remains vastly  
20    different in connected communities than in  
21    digitally isolated communities, and that that is  
22    true even if you look at access to care, quality

1 of care, and health outcome metrics.

2 So, one quick example is if you take  
3 2015 broadband data the least connected counties  
4 actually have the highest rates of chronic  
5 disease. So, for obesity it's 25 percent higher,  
6 for diabetes it's 41 percent higher. In fact,  
7 what concerns us is that rural counties are ten  
8 times as likely as urban areas to be in low  
9 broadband access, and I mean by that below 50  
10 percent, and high diabetes areas, so above the  
11 national average, about 10 percent. Unfortunately  
12 these digitally isolated counties also experience  
13 physician shortages that are more than double the  
14 national average.

15 Just earlier this week a study was  
16 released about how cancer rates are declining  
17 nationally but that Americans living in rural  
18 areas are more likely to die of cancer. What  
19 we're clinging to is the hope that we got from  
20 stakeholders like the National Cancer Institute  
21 and others who believe that connected health can  
22 improve detection and treatment of cancers in



1 rural areas and will be able to address some of  
2 this early mortality and morbidity. The sad thing  
3 here though is that these cancer hot-spot areas in  
4 rural America coincide with low connectivity  
5 areas.

6 So, our charge today is to solicit your  
7 perspectives on where we are with this broadband  
8 health divide and to get potential solutions from  
9 you. We want to gather actionable input on the  
10 persistent challenges and transformative  
11 opportunities that are posed by broadband and  
12 health in rural and underserved areas. And we  
13 really want to drill down if we can to concrete  
14 ideas for moving the ball forward.

15 As you've heard, we are a pretty large  
16 group on the call today and a very diverse group  
17 of participants. There are more than 12 states  
18 represented and we're really delighted that you  
19 saw value in sharing your views with us. We have  
20 representatives from federal and state government,  
21 from state and regional health networks, public  
22 health departments, academia, different levels of

1 government as I said, and tribal nations as well.  
2 On behalf of Michele Ellison who is our Deputy  
3 General Counsel and Chair of the Connect2Health  
4 FCC Task Force we just want to thank you again for  
5 taking time from your busy schedule to join  
6 today's session.

7 Now, we want to hear from you but I'd  
8 like to give my co-moderator, Ben Bartolome, a few  
9 minutes to share with you an overview of how we're  
10 going to proceed during the roughly one-and-a-half  
11 hours that we have together. I will tell you,  
12 because this is our third session, that the time  
13 will go by very quickly so we want to proceed as  
14 efficiently as we can. Ben?

15 MR. BARTOLOME: Thank you, Karen. As we  
16 previously informed you, this session is being  
17 recorded and the recording will be transcribed and  
18 the transcript once complete will be made publicly  
19 available on our website at [www.fcc.gov/health](http://www.fcc.gov/health).  
20 It will also be part of the official record in GN  
21 Docket No. 16-46, which is the FCC's Broadband  
22 Health Docket.

1           Prior to this call we sent all of you a  
2       copy of the Broadband Health Public Notice and a  
3       list of thought questions in order to give you an  
4       opportunity to think about what you might want to  
5       share in advance of today's session. So we're  
6       really looking forward to hearing your input.  
7       Among other things, the input we receive from you  
8       will be used by the Task Force in making  
9       recommendations to the Commission, and your input  
10      will also serve to inform us about future projects  
11      and initiatives we might pursue. So, it's really  
12      important that we hear from as many of you today  
13      as possible.

14           We remind you that if you have any  
15      additional comments or input after today's  
16      session, especially if something comes to mind  
17      later on, we would encourage you to file written  
18      comments in the docket and we sent you  
19      instructions for how to go about doing that. In  
20      addition you may also contact us directly via  
21      email at [connect2health@fcc.gov](mailto:connect2health@fcc.gov). It's the same  
22      email address we've been using to in sending you

1 information for today's session.

2 Now, in terms of format, we are dividing  
3 the session into three segments. Segment one,  
4 which will be about 15-20 minutes, will be devoted  
5 to grounding the session with information from  
6 specific participants that we hope you'll find  
7 informative and we think will serve as an  
8 appropriate level set for today's session.

9 In segment two, which will run about 45  
10 minutes, we'll focus on the questions we sent you  
11 in advance. Those questions relate to two broad  
12 themes that we want to cover today. The first is  
13 about potential solutions for bridging the  
14 broadband health divide and the second is about  
15 emerging issues in broadband health that you think  
16 the FCC as well as other policymakers should  
17 really be focusing on.

18 For segment three, we want to reserve  
19 roughly about 15 minutes at the end to give anyone  
20 an opportunity to provide any other comment or  
21 input, even if unrelated to the two themes I just  
22 mentioned. Finally, if there is time remaining --

1 but I'm anticipating not because we have a pretty  
2 large group which is fantastic by the way; but if  
3 there is time remaining, we may also open up the  
4 lines for more free-flowing discussion.

5 Now, when you are speaking for the first  
6 time please feel free to tell us a little bit  
7 about yourself and your organization, and also  
8 please tell us which city and state you're calling  
9 from. Again, as a reminder, as our AT&T Operator  
10 Carolyn instructed, whenever you're ready to  
11 provide a comment in response to a question please  
12 just press \* and then the number 1 on your phone  
13 and you'll be put in queue.

14 I think that's it. Let me now turn the  
15 session over to Karen to get us started on the  
16 substance. Karen?

17 MS. ONYEIJE: Thanks, Ben, I appreciate  
18 that. As Ben mentioned, this first segment is  
19 really designed to give us all a shared starting  
20 point for the discussion. We're going to ask a  
21 couple of participants to kick things off for us.  
22 At this point, can I ask -- I think you guys are

1 on -- Dr. Patty Mechael, Maureen Lewis, and our  
2 colleagues from the Veterans Health  
3 Administration, Dr. Kevin Galpin and John Peters,  
4 would the four of you please press \* and then the  
5 number 1 on your touchtone phones just to join the  
6 queue now? That would be fantastic.

7 So, participants, I'm just going to  
8 signal that we're going to move very quickly  
9 through some of this general information that  
10 we're hoping to elicit. It will be about the  
11 future of healthcare and connectivity and how  
12 consumers are or aren't adopting the internet for  
13 health, which obviously will be incredibly  
14 relevant to the FCC and other policymakers in the  
15 broadband health space. And then also we want to  
16 get some sense from the Veterans Health  
17 Administration about specific telehealth models,  
18 lessons learned, challenges and so forth that can  
19 help inform a roadmap for success.

20 We hope that these comments are going to  
21 get your thoughts flowing and we're going to try  
22 to keep the segment to 15 minutes, so just note

1 down any thoughts that you have as we go through  
2 this. We will give you an opportunity to respond  
3 or echo or amplify what you're hearing from these  
4 folks.

5 All right. So, Carolyn, would you  
6 please open the line of Dr. Patty Mechael and  
7 announce her please?

8 DR. MECHAEL: Hi, there. Is my line  
9 open?

10 MS. ONYEIJE: Oh, fantastic, I wasn't  
11 sure. Dr. Patty Mechael, thanks again for  
12 joining us. We really appreciate it. Can you  
13 tell us briefly about the personal connected  
14 health alliance and your background? And then  
15 we're really hoping that you might be able to  
16 offer us and the group some perspectives on the  
17 future of healthcare as it relates to broadband  
18 connectivity and some of the future realities that  
19 you think policymakers like the FCC and others on  
20 the call need to be thinking about and preparing  
21 for now?

22 DR. MECHAEL: Sure, thanks, Karen, and

1        thanks to the FCC for taking this on as an issue  
2        and bringing us all together around it. It's  
3        incredibly important. My name is Patty Mechael  
4        and I run a part of the HIMSS Organization called  
5        the Personal Connected Health Alliance. For us  
6        personal connected health and the focus of our  
7        work is really on helping to make health and  
8        wellness an effortless part of daily life through  
9        the increased use and strategic use of personal  
10       connected health devices.

11                So, we now know that there are more  
12       mobile phones than people on the planet, and so we  
13       live in a highly connected world. Through these  
14       connections, what we're finding are a number of  
15       major trends that are happening in society that  
16       are now starting to find their way into the health  
17       spectrum.

18                So, one of the major trends that we are  
19       seeing in this space is a movement towards  
20       personalization and consumerization of everything.  
21       So, travel has become increasingly consumerized,  
22       shopping has become increasingly personalized, our



1 interactions through social media and even the  
2 advertising that we are exposed to is increasingly  
3 being tailored towards individuals.

4           We are seeing similar trends in the  
5 health sector, and a lot of that is being driven  
6 by innovations in technology as well as  
7 innovations in science. So, genomics is playing  
8 an incredibly important role in moving us towards  
9 a more highly personalized experience in health  
10 where through the combined use of data from  
11 systems and tools like electronic health records  
12 to your mobile phone to the data that is coming in  
13 through the increased use of wearable technology,  
14 and then if you add all of those thing with  
15 genomics we're now getting to a more highly  
16 personalized approach to health which also is  
17 pushing into another trend within health is the  
18 shift from treatment of disease and detection of  
19 disease into prevention of disease.

20           Now a lot of the data that we have from  
21 a population health perspective is giving us  
22 greater insight into where are populations most at

1 risk where do we need to focus attention in terms  
2 of our efforts from a health service perspective,  
3 but then where are some of the key opportunities  
4 not only to do early detection and treatment but  
5 to actually prevent disease in the first place?  
6 And this push towards prevention I think is going  
7 to be really, really important and is also being  
8 driven by a lot of the policy work that a number  
9 of you all have been driving forward around  
10 value-based care which is really how do we keep  
11 people out of the healthcare system in their homes  
12 and supported for longer?

13 One of the other major trends that we're  
14 finding in this space is a rapidly aging  
15 population in the United States as well as  
16 throughout the world. And this desire by boomers  
17 to maintain a sense of independence as well as to  
18 maintain their mobility, their activity, et  
19 cetera, and again the proliferation of personal  
20 connected health devices is playing an important  
21 role in that. Now, none of these tools are going  
22 to be very, very useful if we don't have

1 connectivity, so broadband is the enabler that  
2 facilitates a lot of this.

3 And then also if you think about and  
4 look at even the recent natural disasters that  
5 have happened, there is an important role that  
6 telehealth and remote patient monitoring is  
7 playing on the treatment side. So, when you have  
8 shortage of healthcare providers in some of these  
9 key geographic locations, then the importance and  
10 the role of telehealth, remote patient monitoring  
11 and these types of resources and tools, becomes  
12 even more important.

13 So, we're seeing throughout the world,  
14 including in the United States and from the  
15 research that we're doing that there's like a 20  
16 percent uptick in the use of connected health  
17 devices. And we feel that this number is only  
18 going to continue to increase, particularly as  
19 more and more people get involved in their own  
20 self-management of illness, self-care, as well as  
21 the intensified drivers around value-based care  
22 and really pushing more of the onus on individuals

1 to become much more involved in taking care of  
2 themselves. I think this has huge implications  
3 not only for rural areas but also for urban areas,  
4 that we need to really look at connectivity in  
5 general and what the demands are of the population  
6 given the sort of new emerging set of technologies  
7 that are coming into the fore and how are the  
8 policies and the access to broadband being  
9 designed in a way to meet those.

10 I'll pause right there.

11 MS. ONYEIJE: Patty, that's fantastic.  
12 What I love is that this phrase broadband as  
13 enabler, that's great. Can I ask just one quick  
14 question of you? You talked about a 20 percent  
15 uptake in the use of personal connected devices.  
16 I assume you were talking about devices beyond  
17 FitBits and the like. Can you give us a sense of  
18 what that is?

19 MS. MECHAEAL: Sure. So, for diabetes  
20 monitoring we're seeing remote patient monitoring  
21 devices and there has been a lot of really great  
22 research and evidence in this particular area that

1           So, NTIA's broadband adoption research  
2           indicates that in fact consumers are actively  
3           engaged in health related activities online, and  
4           the data also suggests that health activities can  
5           hold some promise for demonstrating the value of  
6           internet connectivity to non-adopters. We revise  
7           our survey periodically to reflect the changes in  
8           the ways that people access and use the internet.

9           So, in July 2013 NTIA began asking  
10          respondents about online activities such as  
11          seeking medical information online, accessing  
12          electronic medical records, and connecting to  
13          health plans or providers. Then in July 2015 we  
14          added another question about health monitoring  
15          services that Patty was just talking about.

16          Because I'm going to be talking a lot of  
17          stats I just want to let you know that our  
18          complete data sets along with a data explore tool  
19          that gives you an opportunity to look at some of  
20          this data by demographics and blogs and reports  
21          analyzing the data are all available on NTIA's  
22          website at [www.ntia.doc.gov](http://www.ntia.doc.gov) under our broadband

1 adoption research. So, I'm going to give you some  
2 highlights from our 2013 and 2015 data that are  
3 pertinent to our discussion today.

4 Internet use at any location by  
5 individuals ages 15 and older increased from 74  
6 percent in 2013 to 76 percent in 2015. In 2013,  
7 percent of internet users, 15 years or  
8 older, researched health information online; just  
9 two years later in 2015 that percentage had  
10 increased almost five-fold to 48 percent according  
11 to our data. Between 2013 and 2015 the percentage  
12 of individuals 15 or older that accessed health  
13 records, insurance information, or communicated  
14 with a doctor online grew 20 percentage points  
15 from 6 percent to 26 percent. In 2015, which is  
16 the first year we began asking about online health  
17 monitoring services among internet users ages 15  
18 or older, 6 percent used such services.

19 But we also have to be greatly concerned  
20 with non- adopters. So, according to NTIA's 2015  
21 data, 33 million households, or about 27 percent  
22 of all U.S. households, did not use the internet

1 at home where we know that families can more  
2 easily share internet access and conduct sensitive  
3 online transactions privately. Of that 33  
4 million, 26 million households which represented a  
5 fifth of the nation's households lacked a single  
6 member who used the internet at home or at any  
7 other location.

8 Consistently our survey results between  
9 2001 and 2015 reveal a consistent pattern of the  
10 reasons why households say they don't use the  
11 internet at home and number one has always been  
12 they don't perceive a need or don't have an  
13 interest in using home internet. The second  
14 reason according to these trends said service is  
15 too expensive, and the third less frequently cited  
16 reason is that these households don't have a  
17 computer or the one that they have is not  
18 adequate.

19 So, between 2013 and 2015 we found that  
20 the proportion of households that cited no need or  
21 interest as their main reason for not using the  
22 internet at home increased percentage points from

1                   percent to 55 percent. But the other  
2           two reasons actually declined, so those expressing  
3           cost concerns or lack of a serviceable computer  
4           dropped during that period. Interestingly, these  
5           trends were the same regardless of demographics,  
6           rural or urban residence, or the presence of  
7           school-aged children in the household, although  
8           the extent of the changes varied a little bit.

9                   Of the 55 percent of households without  
10          home internet use that stated a lack of interest  
11          or need for the service in our 2015 survey, 60  
12          percent of these households reported they did not  
13          need a service while the remaining 40 percent  
14          expressed just general disinterest in having the  
15          service at home. But we think that these more  
16          detailed reasons for no-home internet use can help  
17          inform the development of policies and programs  
18          that address these households' concerns.

19                   So, for example, perhaps digital  
20          literacy programs introduce non-users to online  
21          learning tools on topics that interest them and  
22          may stimulate their desire to use the internet at



1 home. For households that perceive no need for  
2 the service information about internet  
3 applications that enable them to address health,  
4 education, or employment needs may persuade them  
5 that the convenience and the privacy of home  
6 internet access could improve their lives.

7 So, with that I'll stop. Thank you very  
8 much for your interest.

9 MS. ONYEIJE: Maureen, thank you very  
10 much. You've given us a lot to chew on. And you  
11 did warn us right up front, so we appreciate it.  
12 Just one quick clarification because obviously we  
13 are running short on time. Clearly the trends  
14 that you mentioned, some of the trends seem to be  
15 trending in the wrong direction from certainly a  
16 connected care perspective, but you also talked  
17 about 26 million households where there was no one  
18 in the household that used the internet at home.  
19 We were wondering whether that applied to both  
20 fixed broadband and internet use as well as  
21 mobile.

22 MS. LEWIS: Yes, well that includes 26

1 million households that don't use the internet  
2 anywhere, so that's neither at home or at any  
3 other location. So, the type of internet  
4 connectivity doesn't come into play at all for  
5 these households.

6 MS. ONYEIJE: Absolutely. Thank you.  
7 It's not like Ben and I don't have 10 additional  
8 follow up questions for you, but let's pause for a  
9 minute and have Dr. Galpin and John Peters who  
10 lead the Veteran's Health Administration's Office  
11 of Connected Care quickly join the conversation at  
12 this point. Kevin and John, what we are hoping  
13 you can do is given what you just heard can you  
14 share briefly some of the underground experiences  
15 that you have with successful telehealth models,  
16 presumably not related to these 26 million people,  
17 and what's working, what hasn't worked? What  
18 connectivity challenges are you facing in reaching  
19 veterans, particularly those that are living in  
20 rural areas?

21 So, Carolyn would you mind announcing  
22 our next two participants, Dr. Kevin Galpin and

1 John Peters?

2 OPERATOR: Yes. John Peters from the  
3 Veterans Health Administration and Dr. Kevin  
4 Galpin from Veterans Health Affairs Telehealth  
5 Services. Your lines are open.

6 DR. GALPIN: This is Kevin Galpin. I  
7 really appreciate being invited to this forum.  
8 Let me just make sure everyone hears me. Can  
9 someone validate I am --

10 MS. ONYEIJE: We're hearing you  
11 perfectly, Kevin. Thank you.

12 MR. BARTOLOME: Yes, perfectly. Thank  
13 you.

14 DR. GALPIN: Great. I'll go ahead and  
15 just give you an overview of who we are and what  
16 we do. Me, personally, I'm Kevin Galpin, the  
17 Director of Telemedicine for the VA. I have a  
18 background in internal medicine in clinical and  
19 traumatic and have worked in primary care  
20 inpatient medicine health and traumatic and  
21 telehealth for the Veterans Administration.

22 We do a tremendous amount of telehealth.

1 We find the argument for doing telehealth  
2 incredibly compelling as far as our ability to  
3 make care more accessible, bringing that  
4 appointment out to a rural community, increasing  
5 capacity in the organization, moving clinical  
6 resources around so we can put providers in areas  
7 where they otherwise aren't currently living. And  
8 then improving quality; doing some remote type  
9 monitoring programs either into the home or in the  
10 ICU. So it's really integrated into how we are  
11 operating in the organization.

12 Just to give you some of the scope on  
13 this, last year we did 2.17 million episodes of  
14 care to 900 VA sites; 45 percent of the veterans  
15 that got care from telehealth lived in a rural  
16 area. We served over 700,000 veterans in 50  
17 specialty areas.

18 We do different types of telehealth  
19 programs. We do video telehealth, it's called our  
20 Clinical Video Program. We've had a long-running  
21 success with certainly mental health. Anything  
22 that doesn't require a physical examination is

1     pretty straightforward. When I say physical  
2     examination, I should say a hands-on physical  
3     examination because through telehealth you are  
4     doing an examination, but just not a hands-on one.  
5     So, lots of success with mental health, but really  
6     it's hard with 50 specialties. I would just say  
7     broadly if you don't regard physical examination  
8     you can pretty much do your comprehensive clinical  
9     assessment through telehealth.

10           We've also demonstrated some success  
11     with even a primary care model where we have  
12     providers on the other side of the counter helping  
13     to hold stethoscopes, nodescopes (phonetic). We  
14     are moving that type of program out. We do video,  
15     we do store and forward type applications programs  
16     where you might take an image of a dermatologic  
17     rash or the back of an eye in a rural location and  
18     have someone look at it, a provider look at it,  
19     and then send comments back. And we do a lot of  
20     remote monitoring, so we have veterans in their  
21     home and they're giving us information on a daily  
22     basis either signs or symptoms or responses to

1 questionnaires so we can monitor how they're doing  
2 with their care in their home.

3 I think this is really applicable to the  
4 conversation, we have mobile medical units and  
5 mobile vet centers and so we have trucks that will  
6 go out into the community and will park in certain  
7 areas and try and serve communities that are  
8 traditionally underserved, any place we're looking  
9 at a physical building but don't yet have one. In  
10 this type of case broadband becomes a big issue  
11 because trying to set up the connectivity for  
12 these trucks is challenging. And we've seen how  
13 important these types of units are in disaster  
14 response, certainly over the past month; and the  
15 value that a telehealth response can potentially  
16 bring to an emergency area if you have the  
17 technology, if you have the connectivity.

18 But it would be wonderful to know that  
19 wherever we go in the country that we would be  
20 able to stop a truck, be able to get connectivity,  
21 take care of patients. That is something that  
22 clearly we're not close to.

1           I think some of the data that I think  
2   people are interested in, and we've talked about  
3   the number of encounters, but some of the trends.  
4   Just this past year -- and this is part of our  
5   major initiative to make care more accessible --  
6   we really want to do more and more of health care  
7   in the home. We've formally announced our  
8   Anywhere to Anywhere Telehealth Initiative in the  
9   VA. We really believe that if the veteran wants  
10   their care in the home, on their mobile device,  
11   while they're travelling, we should be able to  
12   provide that care.

13           Our data is supporting that. Through  
14   August of this year we did over 55,000 encounters  
15   to either home or non-VA locations and that is a  
16           percent increase from the year before.  
17   We're projecting that we may actually see over the  
18   next year, and almost certainly over the next two  
19   years, but even next year a 2,000 percent increase  
20   over where we are right now. So we think that  
21   area of growth is going to be tremendous. We  
22   think that there are multiple different types of

1 specialties where patients are going to prefer  
2 getting that type of care at a location of their  
3 convenience, either in the home, on a mobile  
4 device, while they're travelling, et cetera.

5 We've seen success with this. There are  
6 some nice published research studies coming out of  
7 the VA related to PTSD and the non-inferiority of  
8 treatment of PTSD into the home versus traditional  
9 care. I think we've had two over the past couple  
10 of years.

11 We've also seen cost reduction data and  
12 travel reduction data. One study showed that we  
13 saved about \$28 per episode of telehealth care at  
14 a rural site. And we do pay for veterans' travel  
15 in a lot of cases so that's different than private  
16 sector. But it was over two hours of drive time  
17 for the veteran that was saved for each one of  
18 these visits. So, at least in our model there is  
19 a very strong return on investment type data that  
20 you can see. But from a clinical perspective I  
21 think there is mounting evidence that this is a  
22 successful way to deliver care.



1           Why this initiative, I think this is so  
2   important for us is we have data we've asked our  
3   Rural Health Department to produce data about how  
4   many veterans -- if we say VA is going to deliver  
5   telehealth and care anywhere to anywhere and we're  
6   going to push out care into the homes, how many  
7   veterans right now can't receive it? That's a  
8   critical number for us. When we got our data  
9   back, we have about 80- to 90,000 veterans that  
10   live in areas where there's either no broadband or  
11   no 4G connectivity. These are data based on 2014  
12   so it's not quite just yesterday but that's a big  
13   number that we'd like to bring down.

14           We believe this should be available  
15   everywhere. We'd like our programs to be  
16   available everywhere. And this is something where  
17   we're looking to other organizations, other  
18   departments in the federal government to help us  
19   with and say how do we reach those veterans? And  
20   we certainly have some contingency plans, but  
21   again that's a big important number for us.

22           To summarize, we do lots of different

1 kinds of telehealth and we really want to do more  
2 and more into the home. We think that is, again,  
3 where we're going to see tremendous -- and again,  
4 the number we're looking at is 2,000 percent  
5 growth maybe even just over a one-year period.

6 But we have concerns that we can't reach everyone.  
7 And we have by zip codes the number of veterans we  
8 can't reach right now and that's our big concern.

9 MS. ONYEIJE: Kevin, I have to tell you  
10 just these stats alone are pretty compelling, both  
11 in terms of what successes you've seen and some of  
12 the various models. But that 80- to 90,000 number  
13 is a little bit chilling especially since you told  
14 us earlier on that you did 700,000 episodes of  
15 telehealth. You served 700,000 veterans and we're  
16 talking over 10 percent of that patient  
17 population. So, I want to thank you for putting  
18 that out there.

19 Now, here's what we'd like to do.  
20 Obviously Patty and Kevin and Maureen and John, we  
21 want you to remain part of this dialogue but what  
22 we'd like to do is to go ahead at this point and

1     move to the second segment where we invite all of  
2     the participants to, again, either comment on or  
3     echo some of the things that they've heard from  
4     the three of you.

5             Just to get us started, I'd like to just  
6     remind you about the couple of themes that we'd  
7     like to put on the table for this segment. There  
8     are two broad themes and they're certainly  
9     consistent with the material that we've shared  
10    with you, there are no surprises here. The first,  
11    because we as a Task Force are focused on not only  
12    defining the problem but making progress towards  
13    solving it, so the first theme is solutions for  
14    bridging the broadband health divide. And the  
15    second is to think a little bit more about some of  
16    the issues that Patty put on the table in terms of  
17    emerging issues for policymakers in broadband  
18    health.

19            We're going to start with the first  
20    issue and we will reserve -- we'll make sure that  
21    we get to the second. So, if you want to comment  
22    on any of those I would urge you to press \* and

1       then 1 on your touchtone phone and you will be in  
2       queue and we will recognize you.

3               As folks are queueing up here I did want  
4       to say in terms of solutions in reaching critical  
5       need areas we as a Task Force have been hearing  
6       from various stakeholders particularly in rural  
7       communities that while they can see the vast  
8       potential of broadband in health along the lines  
9       of what Dr. Galpin was saying, they're struggling  
10      a bit sometimes to operationalize that vision, and  
11      they tell us that part of the problem is that  
12      broadband health solutions are not getting to the  
13      areas and communities that need it the most.

14             So, here's the question we want to pose  
15      to the group: How are states and counties and  
16      health departments and tribal nations and other  
17      non-profits and philanthropy identifying the  
18      specific gap areas, the areas with the most  
19      critical need at the intersection of broadband and  
20      health? How are we identifying those? And then  
21      related to that, do states and local communities  
22      have specific broadband health plans, strategies,

1 policies, for addressing these gap areas, the ones  
2 with high health need and low broadband access and  
3 adoption. So, I put that out on the table, thank  
4 you.

5 If you would press \* then 1 on your  
6 phone we will recognize you. Carolyn, would you  
7 announce the first participant?

8 OPERATOR: Yes, absolutely. We did have  
9 five more folks join the call. Did you want me to  
10 go ahead and announce those names over the call?

11 MS. ONYEIJE: Yes, that would be great.  
12 Thank you.

13 OPERATOR: Sure. We have Preston Wise  
14 from the Wireline Competition Bureau, Eli Fleet  
15 from HIMSS, Dr. Kelly Murphy from FCC, Fred  
16 Eastman from Mercy Health Network, and Kevin Loux  
17 from SOAR.

18 The response now comes from Chantal  
19 Worzala from the American Hospital Association.  
20 Please go ahead.

21 MS. ONYEIJE: Hi, Chantal.

22 MS. WORZALA: Hi, good afternoon. Thank

1     you so much for having this call and for all of  
2     the work that you are doing on helping to close  
3     that broadband health divide. Very exciting work.

4             I did want to give you a little bit of a  
5     sense of how hospitals are using broadband and  
6     telehealth. We are at a point where this is  
7     becoming mainstream and we have 65 percent of  
8     hospitals already using telehealth to some degree  
9     and another 13 percent have it on their very  
10    short-term plans to implement.

11            We hear from our members and  
12    particularly those in rural areas that lack of  
13    adequate broadband is a huge barrier for their  
14    ability to deploy telehealth and remote monitoring  
15    solutions to address some of the really  
16    challenging health divide issues that you've  
17    raised in setting up the call.

18            They do work with their states and local  
19    governments but they're also looking to the  
20    federal government to help fill in those kinds of  
21    blank places on the map. I think the FCC has done  
22    a great job in putting together that broadband map

1       where people can look by zip code and by county to  
2       understand where the broadband gaps are, and I  
3       know that providers in those communities are  
4       really very interested in tapping into some of the  
5       resources that the FCC has available. So, I do  
6       think that the Rural Health Care Program is  
7       crucial, the Healthcare Connect Program is  
8       crucial, for filling in those white spaces on the  
9       map.

10               As you know, the AHA did submit comments  
11       earlier this year to really encourage some of the  
12       improvements in that program that we think will  
13       make it a faster road in terms of spreading  
14       adequate and reliable broadband. That includes  
15       things like increasing the cap, increasing the  
16       discount percentage from 65 percent to 85 percent,  
17       and really doubling down on administrative  
18       simplification for that program.

19               So, I just want to congratulate you all  
20       and thank you all for keeping this issue live.  
21       I'll just share that we at the AHA recently had a  
22       meeting where we brought 350 leaders from